835 (formerly it was commonly five goats), as well as a dog which
684 serves as scapegoat, that is, the dog is supposed to take upon itself the disease with which the sinner is threatened by the cult spirit. If disease nonetheless occurs, medicines which are connected with the cults are prepared (see medicines for cult sicknesses, Vol. II, p. 36).

855 The modern, freer conception or -- among the Fang -- the
582 denial of the taboo against intercourse with blood relatives (in the Pangwe sense) disappears as soon as there is a question of marriage. Then the taboo is in force everywhere and without qualifications. /260/

836 Free intercourse between the young man and the girl is, in
583 many cases, only a shorter or longer testing period which, if the result of the "test" -- in this case a physical one, as contrasted to the spiritual one of which we spoke above -- is favorable, leads to marriage. If the girl is very much in love with her friend, to use a Pangwe expression, he can readily persuade her to follow him immediately to his village. Such an "abduction" is considered -- partly, at least -- to be sanctified by custom, even if the bride's family is usually not overjoyed at the practice. In such a case, the girl's father will set out the next day to demand the purchase price from his son-in-law. If the latter is able to pay him a part, say, half of this price, the matter is settled, and the balance is usually put on a buy-now-pay-later basis. If it turns out, however, that the "abducter" is a poor beggar or that his father does not want to produce the money, the bride is mercilessly taken away from him again even if she pours out streams of tears. You simply cannot get something for nothing. In the majority of cases, however, the girl will not agree to run away with her lover; instead she will demand that her suitor ask her father for her hand in marriage and first make a payment.

583 Every woman, young or old, has the same value. Nonetheless, the amount of the purchase price fluctuates greatly in accordance with general economic conditions. A woman is cheapest among the Jaunde and she is most expensive in the heart of Pangwe country. The price fluctuates between 200 and 750 marks in our money. On the average, one can assume a price of

circumcision was public, and the woman to whom it was done underwent the gibes and insults of all the inhabitants.

The life of the young people is the same as that of the adults. The virginity of a woman is considered unimportant and the Fan have sexual relations from the time they are capable of cohabitation. When a young girl has a child, it belongs to her parents, from whom the child acquires wealth; there is no search for the father and the young girl keeps all the respect which she enjoyed. Young girls are free to give themselves to whomever they please. This very broad morality, however, has one important qualification in that there are, so to speak, no young girls, the little girls having been married off by their parents very early, sometimes even before their birth.

Marriage (alug). Men rarely marry before the age of twenty years, and usually later, because they do not have the means to pay the dowry for taking a wife.

Exogamy is always practiced because marriage between people of the same tribe is sterile. Marriage between cousins is forbidden up to the third generation and in general, marriage is forbidden between persons linked by any kind of kinship; in this case there is also prohibition of sexual relations. No penalty is prescribed for infraction, but the guilty ones will fall ill and their children, if they have any, will not live.

Occasionally there are instances when marriage between relatives is authorized, but only after the practitioner has removed the prohibition by the process [88] called abvule minsem. The practitioner goes to find some termite earth (ngurege), a plant (mekaga), and a vine (nyola dzik); the plant and vine are folded and placed in an etok (a container of banana leaves) full of water. The termite earth is placed on a nzum (see the description in the section on conception) and the etok is placed underneath. The two kinsmen who want to marry also stand underneath it, while the practitioner climbs onto the nzum, dips the leaves in the etok, and says, "nseme ose mi waga bo e wo ma va yüi" (I remove every prohibition that you have made). He hits the termite earth with the leaves and then takes the etok and pours the contents onto the heads of the two people from whom he is removing the prohibition. With the remainder, the man and woman each takes a washing.

A man who has not enough dowry but who finds a young girl eager to marry him may take her away in the night; when the parents come

562 584 compensation, or she may "publicly curse her husband." (2)

2. Cf. V. Largeau, op. cit., article: Femme [Woman].

562 586 Finally, in the case of serious conflicts, the union may be dissolved by "divorce," but the latter may only be used traditionally under well-defined circumstances and "with the assent of the two interested family heads." (3) There are therefore arrangements that allow

3. L. Mba, op. cit., p. 21.

personal reasons to be taken into account and which F. Meyé had in mind when he said, "the Fang woman can in no way be compared to a slave," because of the many kinds of recourse she has at her disposal; these arrangements play a wholly exceptional role in ancient Fang society. Beside the personal element, which also acts as a disturbing element, is the fact that the number of unions indicates wealth and social importance. (4) It results, when the

4. This element is shown particularly in the custom reported by L. Mba: "In comfortably off families, the parents betroth the boys before puberty and the girls after puberty," op. cit., p. 14.

circulation of goods is no longer strictly controlled, in keen competition and numerous disputes.

582 635 It is now essential to consider the persons concerned in the play of marriage and to point out at once that certain persons [127] are excluded from it. Apart from the double exogamy which introduces a form of "fraternity" in a very broad sense of the word, there are prohibitions concerning the precise degrees of relationship as follows: between members of the taġa class (father, mother, uncle, aunt) and the mwanõ class (sons and daughters, nephews and nieces); between members of the same segment, including cousins to the third generation; there are prohibitions on those

582 835 related by marriage: between a man and "any woman, even divorced, of his kinship by marriage," between "members of the son-in-law's family" and any woman divorced from the kinship by marriage. (1) There are also prohibitions relating to the

1. Cf. L. Mba, op. cit., p. 17.

"adopted" (ntobö). It seems important to us to state that these various interdicts exclude from marriage persons between whom there are already very definite relations, those due to effective kinship (including "cousins" to the level where the nd'è bòt is most often split into separate elements), those that exist between groupings already related by marriage, and those which arise from the state known as "adoption." Everything takes place as [609] if the aim sought by means of marriage was to impose an alliance on the most foreign elements — foreign and hostile being considered as synonymous during the period of conquest. (2) The

2. Cf. E. Trezenem, op. cit., pp. 91-92: "Relations with foreign tribes are rare ... the foreigner is accepted with reserve and only when he shows merchandise proving that his visit has no other purpose than to fetch a woman whom he can marry. The tribes are very frequently hostile to one another..."

obligation to respect both double exogamy and the above-mentioned interdicts contributes essentially to broadening among the groupings the field of relations based on co-operation. Incest, 835 783 an infraction of these principles, enters into the category of the nsem defined by Martrou as "ritual impurity, moral defilement." It brings about sterility or illness and arouses in traditional society a collective reaction. V. Largeau in his work mentions the process of expiation (3) in use at that time with the intervention of the

3. Op. cit., article: Inceste [Incest].

582 The first principle regulating kinship is that of double exogamy, in the paternal line, but also in the maternal line. Marriage is not allowed within one's own clan, nor within the clan of one's mother. Incest within the maternal clan is scarcely less serious than incest within the paternal clan, but the interdiction in this line is not definitive and hereditary. At the present time the prohibition seems to die out after two generations: a great-grandson may take a wife from the clans of his maternal great-grandmothers, and even a grandson from that of his maternal grandmother. It is another matter in the paternal line, whose genealogy children learn by heart. However, on account of the present state of forgetfulness, I do not know the exact rules.

601 A second characteristic of kinship is that it is classificatory and that the nomenclature is modified as to person, sometimes as to gender, in accordance with the subject of the relationship. Thus "father" or "mother," for instance, are called:

1st person	2nd person	3rd person
tate	éso	ésa
nane	nyua	nyia

according to whether there is involved a relative of the speaker, of the person spoken to, or of the person spoken about.

For "brother" and "sister" the terms furthermore vary according to the sex of the subject of the relationship:

monyañ (a contraction of moneyañ (1) = mother's son) = brother

1. Third person: — nyañ, from nyia, "mother;" 1st person, mojañ: — jañ, the same word as jañ = jal, "mother's native hamlet."

of a man or sister of a woman of the clan; while
the sister of a man = kal,
the brother of a woman = ndôm.

A man's son is ndôman, his daughter is ngon; a woman's /son and daughter/ are simply bon (sing. mon), "the little ones."

601 The generic /terms/ of kinship are formed from these words, for
602 instance:

601 602 ndômenyañ (3rd person) = mother's brother, designating the maternal uncle and all his bobenyañ (clan or consanguineal brothers); this is a respect relationship;

motate, a contraction of mone tate = son of my father, designating half brothers on the father's side, with an idea of respect;

monekal = sister's son, designating nephews and uterine cousins with whom marriage is forbidden, although they belong to a different ayoñ; this is a joking relationship; the same term is applied to brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law;

[849] monengon = daughter's son, designating uterine relatives within the clan and particularly sisters' illegitimate children, who are members of the clan but with a certain capitis diminutio, loss of status;

and so forth, relationship always being reckoned by clan, generation, and sex. This is borne out by the way ethnic constructions are formed: a Boulou, a /51/ Yenjôk, are mone bulu, mone yenjôk, a "child of Boulou," a "child of Yenjôk"; a Boulou woman is ngone bulu, a "daughter of Boulou"; two bo'be yenjôk would therefore be brothers, bobenyañ. What is curious is that this term, the most frequently employed for full brother or half brother on the father's side, clearly refers to a uterine relationship, since it means, literally, "mother's son."

Kinship in relation to order of generations (ndaé = grandchild; éndil = great-grandchild) entered into the choice of a name (éyôlé), /a practice that is/ not well understood at present. Even at the present, similarity of biyôlé creates a sort of quasi relationship between the homonyms mimbôm (sing. mbôm) or bemôé (sing. môé), with the obligation of reciprocal help.

Parents-in-law are betyi (possibly related to étyi = prohibition?); we shall mention this again in connection with marriage, but it may be pointed out here that the term is applied equally to the first wife considered with respect to her co-wives.

e. Marriage, Descent

582 The primary rule of marriage remains the prohibition against incest, the clan exogamy already mentioned. To take a wife from one's own or one's mother's clan is forbidden, also to marry the daughters of lineage sisters to quite a distant degree, even though

582 they belong to another clan. This is merely the application of exogamy to the maternal line and is less observed than the other rule of exogamy.

582 583 Having established this, we may distinguish several forms of marriage—Bertaut counts seven—or, on the contrary, consider them all to be derived from "regular marriage," mfañ aluk (from fañ = to do well, correctly, and luk = to marry). This kind of marriage is based on the payment of the "bride price," nsuba, nowadays essentially monetary and giving rise to abuses that have often been described, but in former times it was ritual in character, at least partially so (a century ago there was already a commercial element). The "bride price" of the past included local products (ivory, cattle) (1), imported merchandise (biôm), especially loincloths, guns and

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1. The bride-price sheep, bikiga or bityiga, up to seven, which were in theory bred with a special view to payment of the nsuba and were sacrificed at the time of the marriage.

[432] ammunition, salt, trade alcohol, and, finally, a special iron currency in the form of flat arrowheads tied into bundles (bityé, biki; bikpwelé; the unit of count being the bundle, akutu bikpwelé). The last was used only for ritual or magical purposes (2). There are reasons for

[332]

2. There is a prohibition against making them; all those to be seen look old.

believing that the composition of bride prices in local products and merchandise varied according to clan structure, the affiliation of the spouses, and the marriages previously concluded by the group. Nothing of this survives today, and the bride price has become a bargaining, at times pretty sordid, even a real /52/ auction, with the bride often the first to boast of the high price she has obtained in the marriage market.

[582] 584 Marriage not long ago was, and still in a measure remains, a group affair, the concern of the two meyoñ and two menda me bôt involved, which is discussed between the head of the young man's family and the guardian responsible for the future wife, nya ndômô, "true brother," that is, an ascendant paternal relative or paternal

861 initiations and now catechism bring all the boys and girls of a village together.

854 Adult surveillance is casual: grown people mainly want /95/ children to know their place and not to be a nuisance. Otherwise, it is mostly the older children who take care of the younger ones.

c. Adolescence

882 854 Boys and girls share their mother's hut until the beginning of adolescence, at which age the boys go to live by themselves, formerly in the "guardhouse," aba, nowadays in a hut on the paternal "allotment." Formerly, girls were sometimes married off before birth and [582] went to the husband's village at about eight years of age; this is very unusual today, but it is still fairly common for them to go at that age to a paternal or maternal aunt or to a married sister, where they act more or less as servants until puberty, being trained meanwhile. It is also quite common for boys to go to live with a relative whose [87] house is nearer a school than is their own village (1).

1. But a motive of proximity to school is not a complete explanation, merely an additional reason for leaving. In fact, a study of urban centers equipped with [574] schools of a good level shows that 30 percent of the children live outside the paternal household with uncles or grandparents. Whatever a father's personal view, he could never refuse his son to relatives expressing a wish to have the boy for some time. (J. B.)

881 304 864 The bongô /children/ become ndôman, a youth, or ngon, a girl, at the onset of puberty. The transition is marked by circumcision among boys, atyi'i atyel, in the past sometimes followed by the first initiation, bekungu. Circumcision is done between the ages of six and twelve, usually around ten. Nowadays it is often done at a dispensary, while it formerly was the occasion of a family and village ceremony. Subjects for circumcision prepared for the ceremony with a relatively short seclusion (of a fortnight) during which they were

youths in the aba and prepared for further initiations, while beginning to participate fully in masculine activities, work and games. The bekungu (Fang, bekhun?) initiation that came directly after circumcision was not a general practice. My own impression is that this was not a tribal or clan rite like sɔ̂, but that of an association of diviners or seers involving only specially endowed individuals, perhaps related to the ndɔ̂ngɔ̂ rite restricted to grown men, which appears to have identical ritual tattoo marks.

For the mo'minga reaching puberty there is no stage equivalent to circumcision. In spite of what Trilles says, excision has apparently never been used except as a punishment for certain kinds of adultery or mild incest. It must not be forgotten that a little girl very soon went to live with her affinal family and that she was deflowered as soon as she reached puberty. She very rarely remained élenan, that is, pubescent and unmarried, and then for a very short time. One might almost say that her adolescence was telescoped into the period between childhood and the arrival of puberty marked by the mevungu rite.

This adolescent phase is now prolonged by the law fixing the marriageable age at fourteen (puberty usually comes during the twelfth year), by school attendance, and by the change in the bride-price system. Most of my friends of a certain age see in these facts the reasons for a crisis in immorality which they probably to some extent exaggerate.

Nevertheless, first menstruation was apparently acknowledged in a ceremony in which only women took part, but this may have been merely a preliminary to the mevungu initiation, about which hardly anything is known. Otherwise /as regards female adolescence/ coition is forbidden to immature girls, while unmarried girls who have begun menstruating have actually great sexual freedom, even in Christian circles. It must, however, be realized that only too often, especially in schools, there are girls deflowered before puberty, whereas boys seem to wait for circumcision /97/ before their first exploits — there are parents, worried about their sons' "good behavior," who give them aphrodisiacs as encouragement.

d. Transition to Adulthood

The ndoman is not yet a real person, nya mɔ̂tɔ̂; undoubtedly he participates in men's work, in hunting and clearing the land, but he

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304 The Fan and all the tribes of their group have preserved it. In all clans, at a time decided upon by the chief, youths must be circumcised. This rule is also accepted by all the related tribes, Dzèm and Dzandzama, Bulu, Shéké, Batéké, etc.

During my many journeys I hever met a single Fan who had
●[582] not been circumcised. No young girl would agree to marrying an
[588] uncircumcised man, under any conditions. This by the way indicates the value, even in terms of Fan custom, of the temporary marriages contracted with Europeans. The Fan look upon these unions simply as concubinage and designate them by the same word, évex̌.

Although the Fan group has kept circumcision, others have not, so that it cannot be said to now be a general rite among the Bantu. The custom is not the result of Semitic infiltration; some Bantu tribes like the Kavirondo, among whom the Arabs have penetrated, do not practice it, while the Fan, who have never been in contact with Moslems, do so.

a) Is circumcision a religious rite?

We shall take up the subject [circumcision] first from the general, then from the particular, point of view.

The first question to be raised is: Is circumcision a religious rite by nature and origin, consecrating a person to a deity, as by a sort of sacrament? (1)

1. Cf. Lagrange, Études sémitiques [Studies in Semitic Religion], p. 242.

According to certain writers, Renan in particular, circumcision is a purely hygienic custom: "In the beginning," he says, "this custom had neither the widespread character nor the religious significance that was given it later. Without the operation, certain Oriental peoples would be condemned to semi-impotence and dangerous impurities."

Arcin also wrote: "Circumcision is the most important religious ceremony of the black peoples. This practice has probably been made necessary by a special physiological